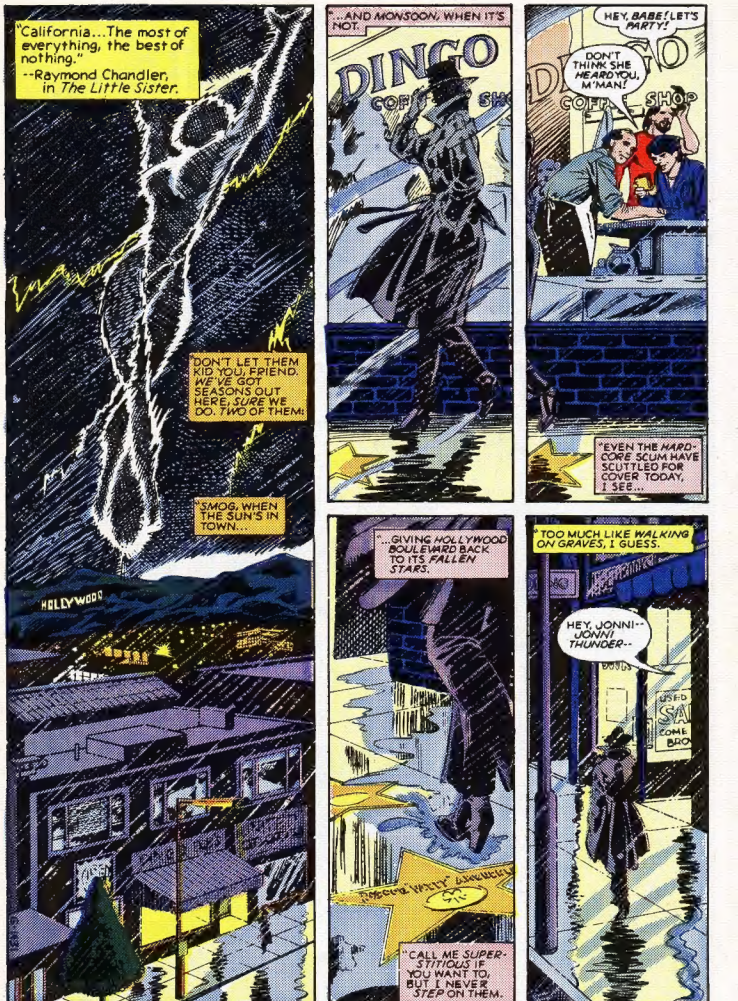
4 PART MINI-SERIES
ROY & DANN THOMAS and DICK GIORDANO
MAGNUM AND MARLOWE--MAKE ROOM! HERE COMES--
1
75¢
CAN. 95¢
U.K. 30p
FEB. 85
JONNI THUNDER
B.H.B. Thunderbolt
SHOCKING ORIGIN ISSUE!
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.


"California...The most of everything, the best of nothing."
--Raymond Chandler, in The Little Sister.
DON'T LET THEM KID YOU, FRIEND. WE'VE GOT SEASONS OUT HERE, SURE WE DO. TWO OF THEM:
"SMOG, WHEN THE SUN'S IN TOWN...
HOLLYWOOD
"...AND MONSOON, WHEN IT'S NOT.
DINGO
HEY, BABE! LET'S PARTY!
DON'T THINK SHE HEARD YOU, M'MAN!
"EVEN THE HARD-CORE SCUM HAVE SCUTTLED FOR COVER TODAY, I SEE...
"...GIVING HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD BACK TO ITS FALLEN STARS.
"CALL ME SUPERSTITIOUS IF YOU WANT TO, BUT I NEVER STEP ON THEM.
"TOO MUCH LIKE WALKING ON GRAVES, I GUESS.
HEY, JONN!-- JONN! THUNDER--

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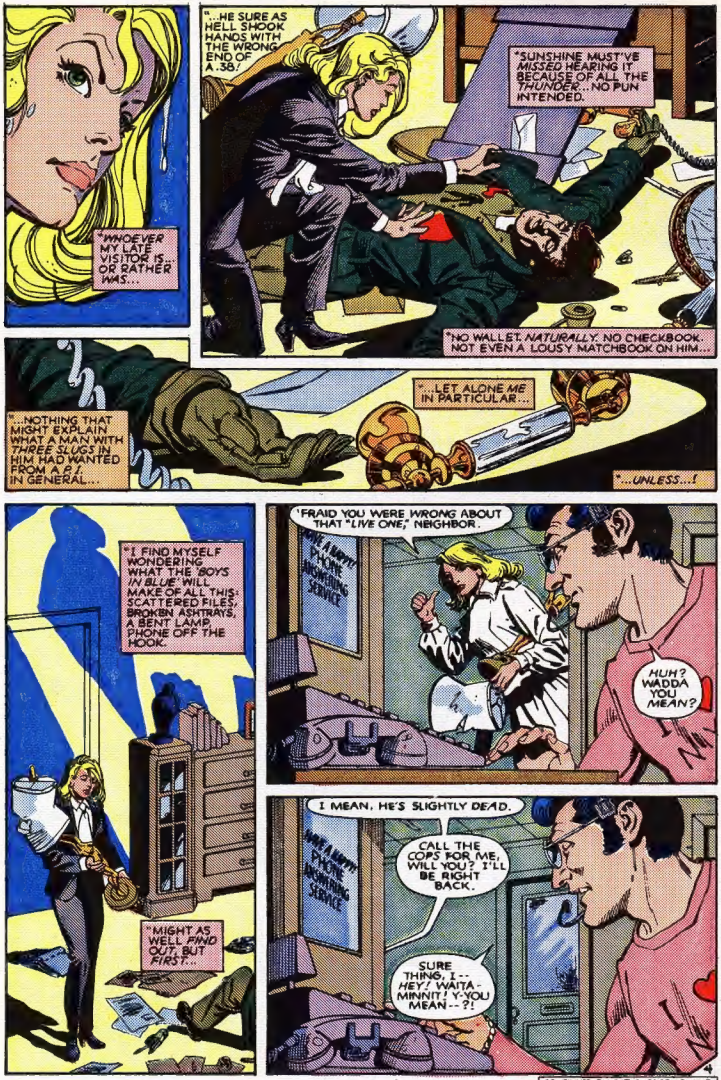
USED BOOKS
--SAVING YOUR UMBRELLA FOR A RAINY DAY?
NOT REALLY, LEON.
IT'S LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN MY LIFE.
BUSTED.
DAMN SHAME ABOUT YOUR DAD, KID.
YEAH. SEE YOU LATER.
*BEING AWAY FOR TWO WEEKS FOR THE FUNERAL AND ALL...
*...I GUESS I SOMEHOW EXPECTED THIS PLACE TO LOOK DIFFERENT WHEN I GOT BACK.
"BUT NOTHING'S CHANGED.
Elevator Out of Order
the Management
"SEEMS LIKE NOTHING EVER CHANGES...'
"...EXCEPT WHAT YOU WANT TO STAY THE SAME.
HAVE A HAPPY! PHONE ANSWERING SERVICE
MORNING, SUNSHINE! ANY CALLS?
'BOUT TIME! NEGATIVE ON THE CALLS...
...BUT I SENT A LIVE ONE DOWN THE HALL FOR YOU.
THANKS.
"I DIDN'T REALLY FEEL LIKE THANKING SUNSHINE.
J. THUN
INVESTIGATI
"MY FIRST DAY WORKING SOLO...
"...AND SOME BOZO--PARDON ME, CLIENT--JUST BARGES IN...
"...LIKE HE CAN'T WAIT TO TELL ME HIS TROUBLES.
*AND BELIEVE ME, HE HAD THEM.

"--A BELLYFUL!
From the Casebook of
JONNI THUNDER
and Thunderbolt
-307-
THUNDER
TIGATIONS
OH MY GOD--!
...NOT IN THE STARS, BUT IN OURSELVES...!
ROY & DANN THOMAS
writers/creators/artist
DICK GIORDANO
co-plotted and co-created by
GERRY CONWAY
A. TOLLIN
colorist
BUSHALIS & ORZECHOWSKI
letterers
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO -- ERNIE COLÓN


"WHOEVER MY LATE VISITOR IS... OR RATHER WAS...
"...HE SURE AS HELL SHOOK HANDS WITH THE WRONG END OF A .38!
"SUNSHINE MUST'VE MISSED HEARING IT BECAUSE OF ALL THE THUNDER... NO PUN INTENDED.
"NO WALLET, NATURALLY. NO CHECKBOOK. NOT EVEN A LOUSY MATCHBOOK ON HIM...
"...NOTHING THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN WHAT A MAN WITH THREE SLUGS IN HIM HAD WANTED FROM A P.I. IN GENERAL...
"...LET ALONE ME IN PARTICULAR...
"...UNLESS...I
"I FIND MYSELF WONDERING WHAT THE 'BOYS IN BLUE' WILL MAKE OF ALL THIS: SCATTERED FILES, BROKEN ASHTRAYS, A BENT LAMP, PHONE OFF THE HOOK.
"MIGHT AS WELL FIND OUT, BUT FIRST...
'FRAID YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT THAT "LIVE ONE," NEIGHBOR.
HUH? WADDA YOU MEAN?
I MEAN, HE'S SLIGHTLY DEAD.
CALL THE COPS FOR ME, WILL YOU? I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
SURE THING, I-- HEY! WAITA-MINNIT! Y-YOU MEAN--?!
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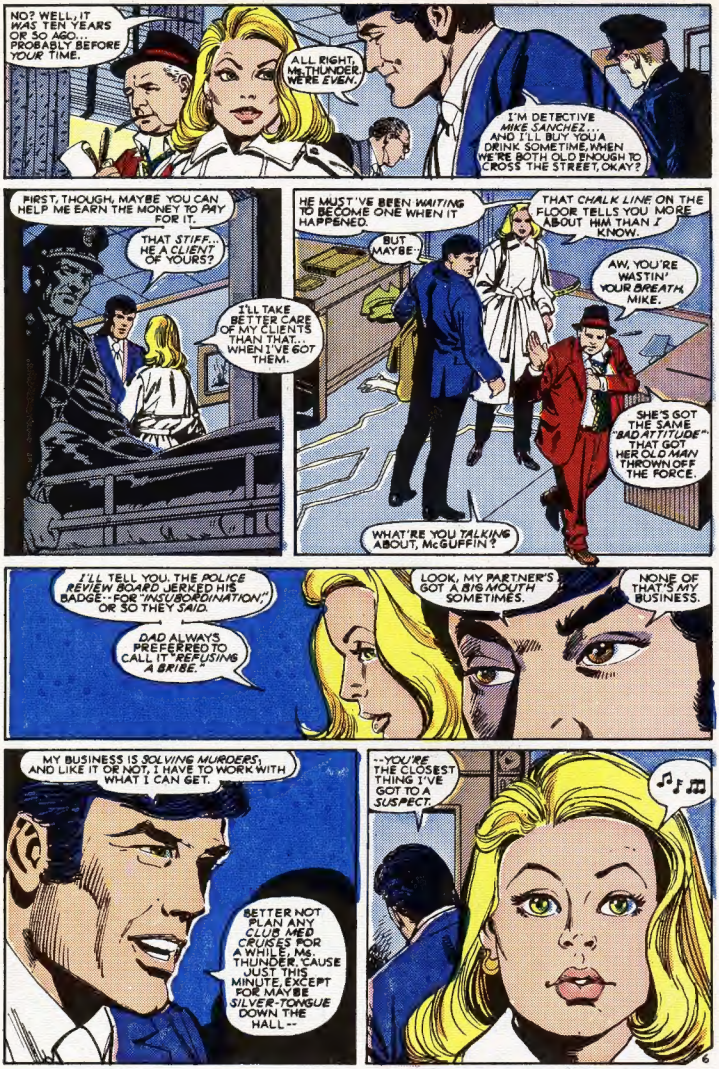
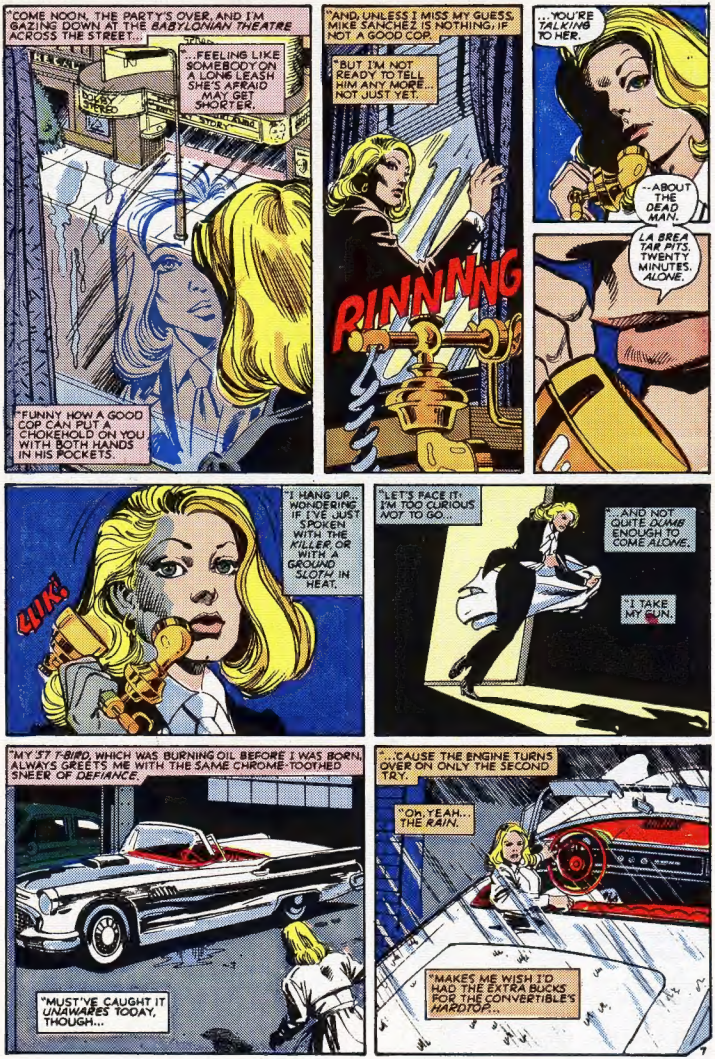
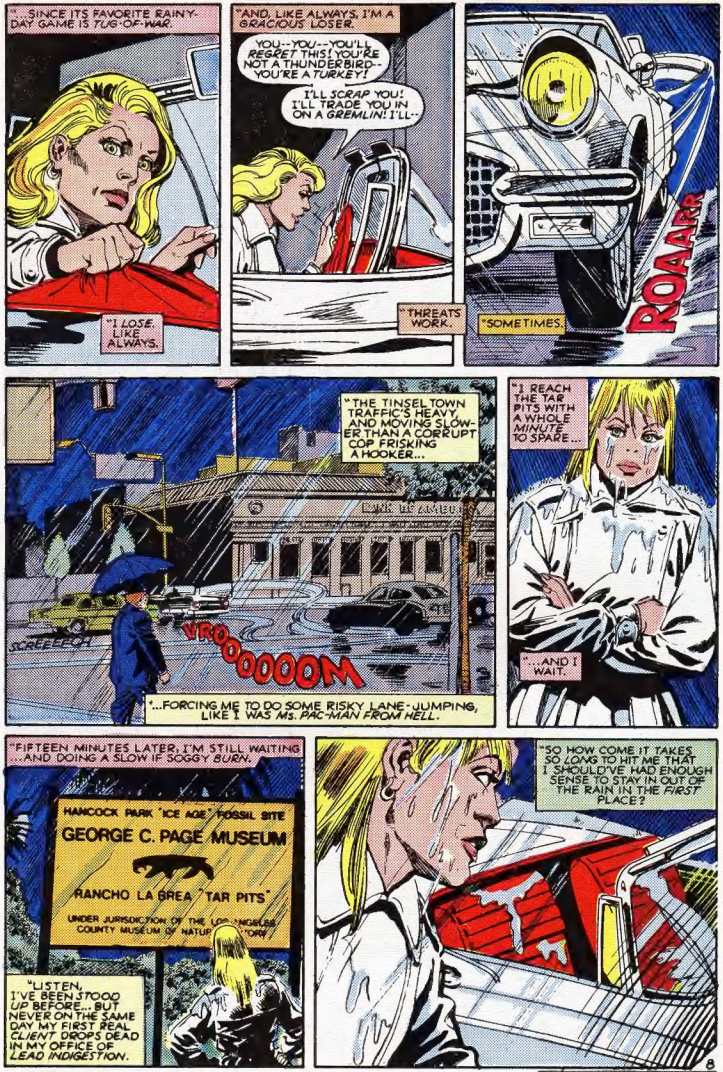
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

*WHEN I GET BACK, FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, MY COLORFUL CORPSE HAS ALL THE COMPANY HE CAN STAND...
MORNING, GENTS. MIND IF I COME IN?
NO PRESS! WE JUST GOT HERE OURSELF. HOW'D YOU GET PAST THE GUY DOWNSTAIRS?
...AND GIVE ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT ON A PRIVATE DETECTIVE, NAME OF J. THUNDER.
YEAH, JOE, YOU SPELL IT LIKE RED RYDER'S OLD HORSE, NOT THE GUY IN THE SATURDAY MORNING CARTOONS.
-30-
Huh? WELL, THE ANSWER-PHONE GUY DOWN THE HALL SAYS THE FIRST NAME'S JOHNNY. YOU SPELL THAT "J-O-"
"...-N-N-Y."
YOU HEAR THAT? I'LL CALL YOU BACK.
-30
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO BEAT IT, GIRL.
HOLD IT, McGUFFIN.
YOU A FRIEND OF THIS THUNDER GUY, MISS?
SOME DAYS, FELLA...
...I'M THE ONLY FRIEND SHE'S GOT.
JEEZ!
AREN'T YOU A LITTLE, uh, YOUNG FOR THIS LINE OF WORK?
MY DAD OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T THINK SO, WHEN HE MADE ME HIS PARTNER.
'COURSE, THAT WAS JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, RIGHT BEFORE HE... DIED.
HE USED TO BE ON THE FORCE. MAYBE YOU HEARD OF HIM.
JIM THUNDER?


NO? WELL, IT WAS TEN YEARS OR SO AGO... PROBABLY BEFORE YOUR TIME.
ALL RIGHT, MS. THUNDER. WE'RE EVEN.
I'M DETECTIVE MIKE SANCHEZ. AND I'LL BUY YOU A DRINK SOMETIME, WHEN WE'RE BOTH OLD ENOUGH TO CROSS THE STREET, OKAY?
FIRST, THOUGH, MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME EARN THE MONEY TO PAY FOR IT.
THAT STIFF. HE A CLIENT OF YOURS?
I'LL TAKE BETTER CARE OF MY CLIENTS THAN THAT... WHEN I'VE GOT THEM.
HE MUST'VE BEEN WAITING TO BECOME ONE WHEN IT HAPPENED.
BUT MAYBE--
THAT CHALK LINE ON THE FLOOR TELLS YOU MORE ABOUT HIM THAN I KNOW.
AW, YOU'RE WASTIN' YOUR BREATH, MIKE.
SHE'S GOT THE SAME "BAD ATTITUDE" THAT GOT HER OLD MAN THROWN OFF THE FORCE.
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, McGUFFIN?
I'LL TELL YOU. THE POLICE REVIEW BOARD JERKED HIS BADGE--FOR "INSUBORDINATION," OR SO THEY SAID.
DAD ALWAYS PREFERRED TO CALL IT "REFUSING A BRIBE."
LOOK, MY PARTNER'S GOT A BIG MOUTH SOMETIMES.
NONE OF THAT'S MY BUSINESS.
MY BUSINESS IS SOLVING MURDERS, AND LIKE IT OR NOT, I HAVE TO WORK WITH WHAT I CAN GET.
BETTER NOT PLAN ANY CLUB MED CRUISES FOR A WHILE, MS. THUNDER, 'CAUSE JUST THIS MINUTE, EXCEPT FOR MAYBE SILVER-TONGUE DOWN THE HALL--
--YOU'RE THE CLOSEST THING I'VE GOT TO A SUSPECT.


"COME NOON, THE PARTY'S OVER, AND I'M GAZING DOWN AT THE BABYLONIAN THEATRE ACROSS THE STREET...
...FEELING LIKE SOMEBODY ON A LONG LEASH SHE'S AFRAID MAY GET SHORTER.
"FUNNY HOW A GOOD COP CAN PUT A CHOKEHOLD ON YOU WITH BOTH HANDS IN HIS POCKETS.
"AND, UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, MIKE SANCHEZ IS NOTHING, IF NOT A GOOD COP.
"BUT I'M NOT READY TO TELL HIM ANY MORE... NOT JUST YET.
RINNNNG
...YOU'RE TALKING TO HER.
--ABOUT THE DEAD MAN.
LA BREA TAR PITS. TWENTY MINUTES. ALONE.
CLIK.
"I HANG UP... WONDERING IF I'VE JUST SPOKEN WITH THE KILLER OR WITH A GROUND SLOPY IN HEAT.
"LET'S FACE IT. I'M TOO CURIOUS NOT TO GO..
...AND NOT QUITE DUMB ENOUGH TO COME ALONE.
"I TAKE MY GUN.
"MY '57 T-BIRD, WHICH WAS BURNING OIL BEFORE I WAS BORN, ALWAYS GREETS ME WITH THE SAME CHROME-TOOTHED SNEER OF DEFIANCE.
"MUST'VE CAUGHT IT UNAWARES TODAY, THOUGH...
...'CAUSE THE ENGINE TURNS OVER ON ONLY THE SECOND TRY.
"OH, YEAH... THE RAIN.
"MAKES ME WISH I'D HAD THE EXTRA BUCKS FOR THE CONVERTIBLE'S HARDTOP...


"...SINCE ITS FAVORITE RAINY-DAY GAME IS TUG-OF-WAR.
"I LOSE. LIKE ALWAYS.
"AND, LIKE ALWAYS, I'M A GRACIOUS LOSER.
"YOU--YOU--YOU'LL REGRET THIS! YOU'RE NOT A THUNDERBIRD--YOU'RE A TURKEY!
I'LL SCRAP YOU! I'LL TRADE YOU IN ON A GREMLIN! I'LL--
"THREATS WORK.
"SOMETIMES.
ROAARR
"THE TINSEL TOWN TRAFFIC'S HEAVY, AND MOVING SLOWER THAN A CORRUPT COP FRISKING A HOOKER...
SCREEECH
VROOOOOOM
"...FORCING ME TO DO SOME RISKY LANE-JUMPING, LIKE I WAS MS. PAC-MAN FROM HELL.
"I REACH THE TAR PITS WITH A WHOLE MINUTE TO SPARE...
"...AND I WAIT.
"FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, I'M STILL WAITING ...AND DOING A SLOW IF SOGGY BURN.
HANCOCK PARK "ICE AGE" FOSSIL SITE
GEORGE C. PAGE MUSEUM
RANCHO LA BREA "TAR PITS"
UNDER JURISDICTION OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
"LISTEN, I'VE BEEN STOOD UP BEFORE... BUT NEVER ON THE SAME DAY MY FIRST REAL CLIENT DROPS DEAD IN MY OFFICE OF LEAD INDIGESTION.
"SO HOW COME IT TAKES SO LONG TO HIT ME THAT I SHOULD'VE HAD ENOUGH SENSE TO STAY IN OUT OF THE RAIN IN THE FIRST PLACE?
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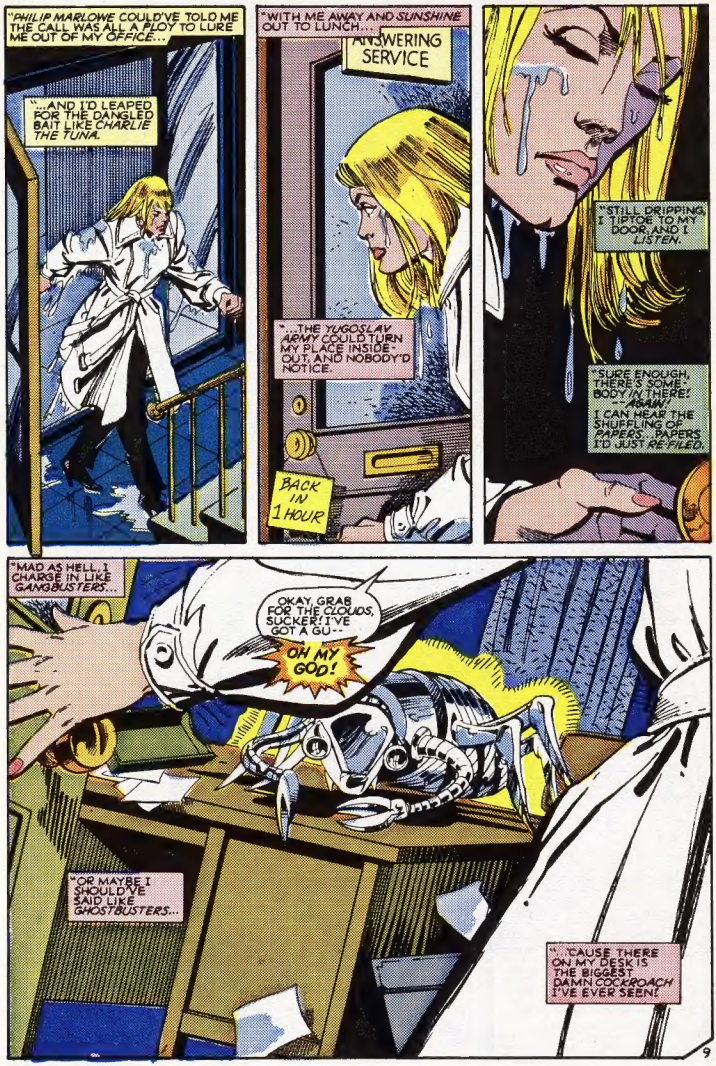
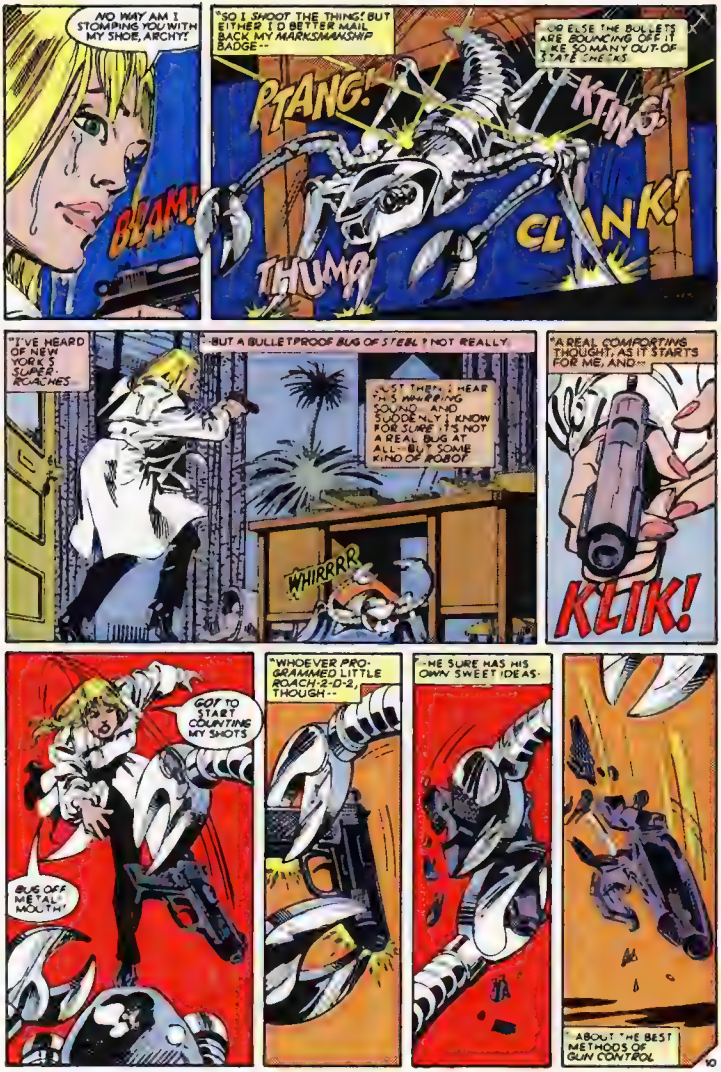
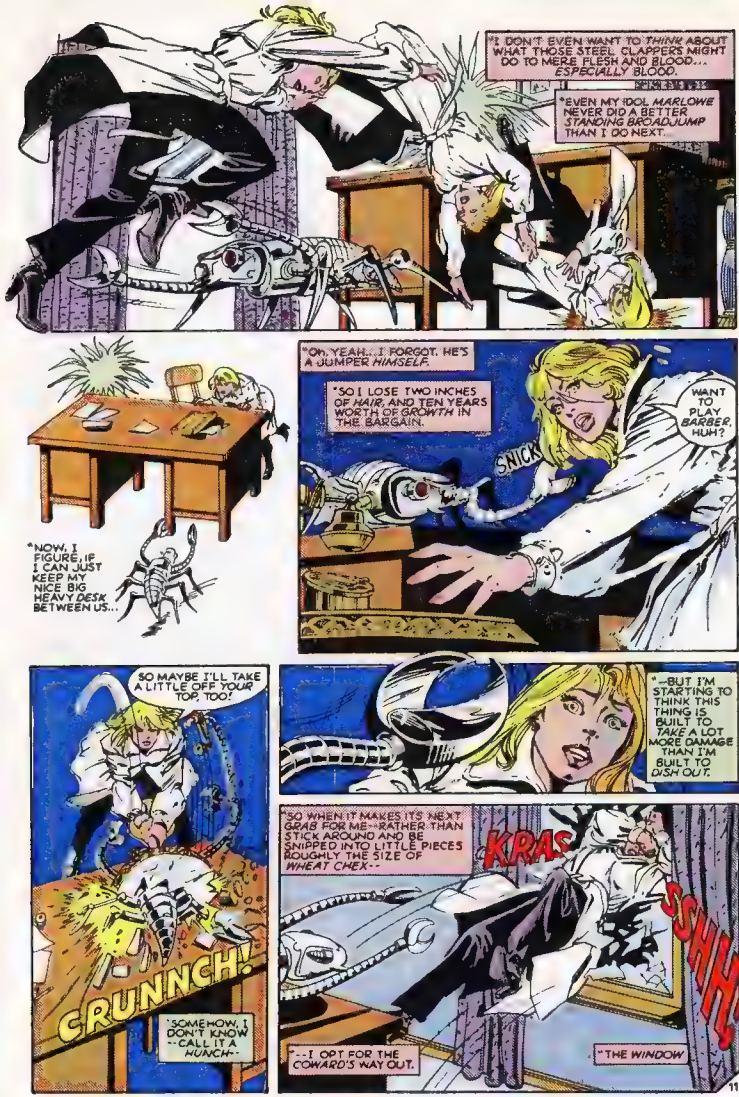
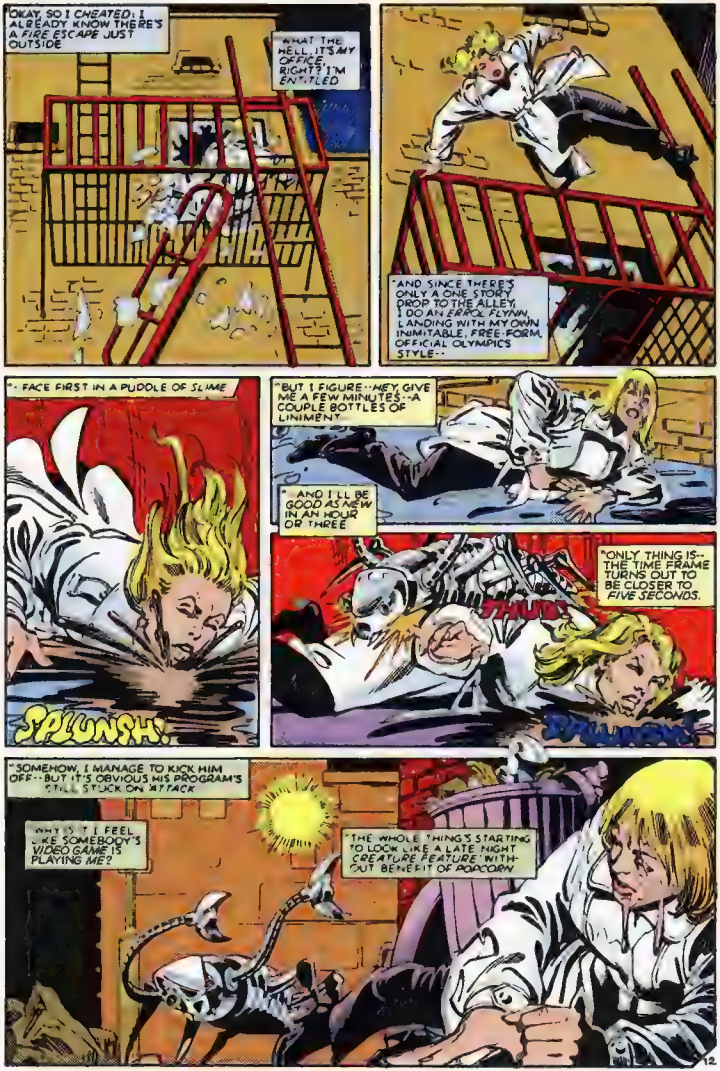
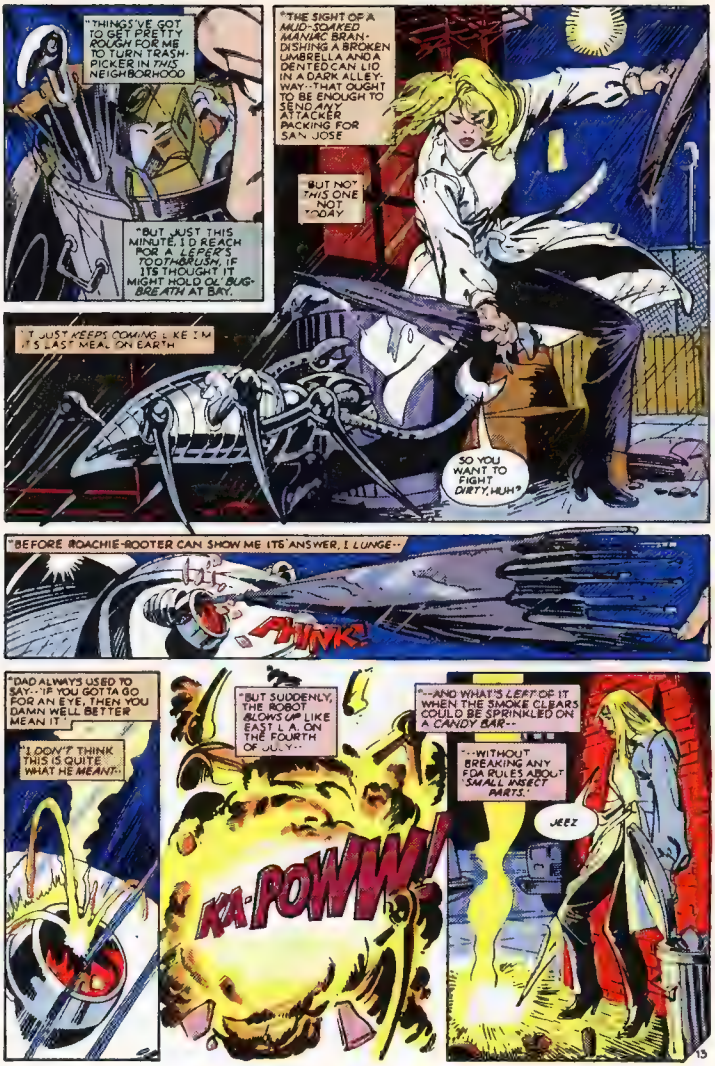
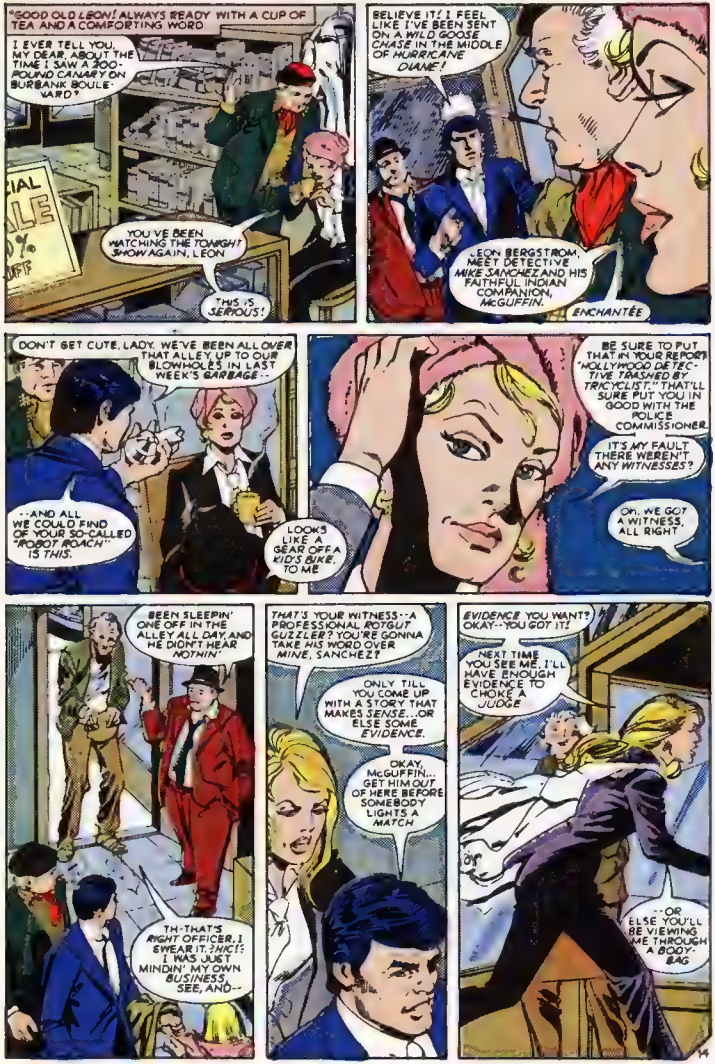

"PHILIP MARLOWE COULD'VE TOLD ME THE CALL WAS ALL A PLOY TO LURE ME OUT OF MY OFFICE...
"...AND I'D LEAPED FOR THE DANGLED BAIT LIKE CHARLIE THE TUNA.
"WITH ME AWAY AND SUNSHINE OUT TO LUNCH...
ANSWERING SERVICE
"...THE YUGOSLAV ARMY COULD TURN MY PLACE INSIDE-OUT, AND NOBODY'D NOTICE.
BACK IN 1 HOUR
"STILL DRIPPING, I TIPTOE TO MY DOOR, AND I LISTEN.
"SURE ENOUGH, THERE'S SOMEBODY IN THERE! --AGAIN! I CAN HEAR THE SHUFFLING OF PAPERS... PAPERS I'D JUST RE-FILED.
"MAD AS HELL, I CHARGE IN LIKE GANGBUSTERS...
OKAY, GRAB FOR THE CLOUDS, SUCKER! I'VE GOT A GU--
OH MY GOD!
"OR MAYBE I SHOULD'VE SAID LIKE GHOSTBUSTERS...
"...'CAUSE THERE ON MY DESK IS THE BIGGEST DAMN COCKROACH I'VE EVER SEEN!

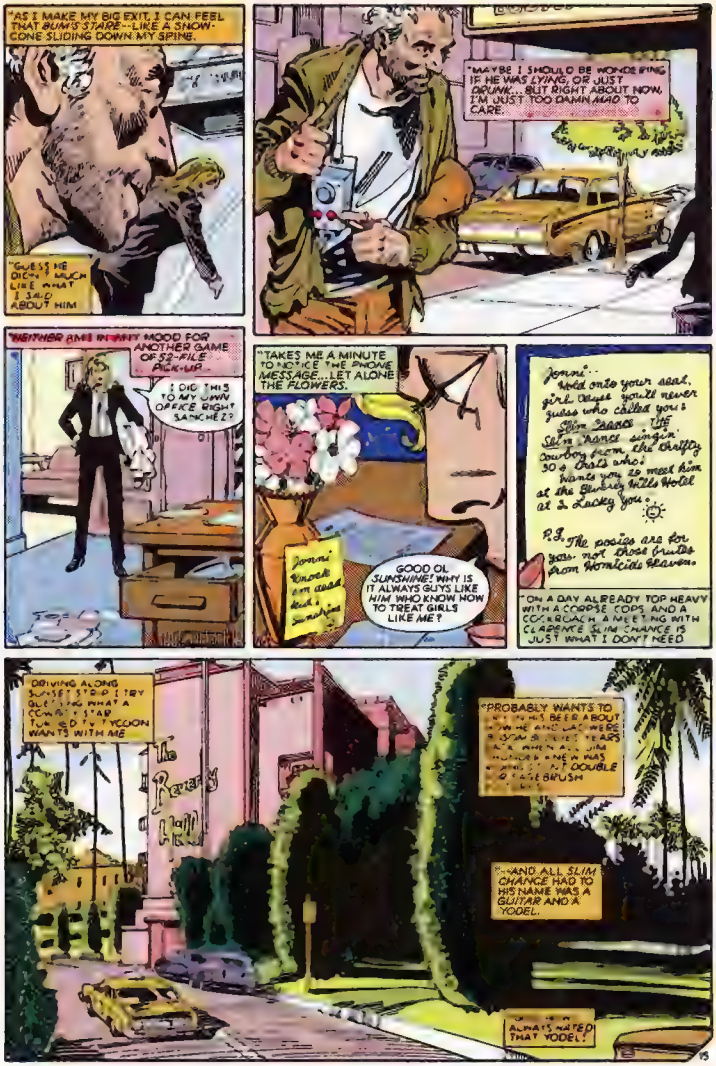

NO WAY AM I STOMPING YOU WITH MY SHOE, ARCHY!
BLAM!
"SO I SHOOT THE THINGS! BUT EITHER I'D BETTER MAIL BACK MY MARKSMANSHIP BADGE--
OR ELSE THE BULLETS ARE BOUNCING OFF IT KE SO MANY OUT-OF STATE SMEARS
PTANG!
KTWG!
CL NK!
THUMP!
"I'VE HEARD OF NEW YORK'S SUPER-ROACHES
--BUT A BULLETPROOF BUG OF STEEL? NOT REALLY
JUST THEN, I HEAR THIS WHIRRING SOUND AND SUDDENLY I KNOW FOR SURE IT'S NOT A REAL BUG AT ALL--BUT SOME KIND OF ROBOT
WHIRRRR
"A REAL COMFORTING THOUGHT, AS IT STARTS FOR ME, AND--
KLIK!
BUG OFF METAL-MOUTH!
GOT TO START COUNTING MY SHOTS
"WHOEVER PROGRAMMED LITTLE ROACH-2-D-2, THOUGH--
--HE SURE HAS HIS OWN SWEET IDEAS.
--ABOUT THE BEST METHODS OF GUN CONTROL


I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THOSE STEEL CLAPPERS MIGHT DO TO MERE FLESH AND BLOOD... ESPECIALLY BLOOD.
EVEN MY IDOL MARLOWE NEVER DID A BETTER STANDING BROADJUMP THAN I DO NEXT...
NOW, I FIGURE, IF I CAN JUST KEEP MY NICE BIG HEAVY DESK BETWEEN US...
OH, YEAH... I FORGOT. HE'S A JUMPER HIMSELF.
SO I LOSE TWO INCHES OF HAIR, AND TEN YEARS WORTH OF GROWTH IN THE BARGAIN.
SNICK
WANT TO PLAY BARBER, HUH?
SO MAYBE I'LL TAKE A LITTLE OFF YOUR TOP, TOO!
CRUNNCH!
SOMEHOW, I DON'T KNOW --CALL IT A HUNCH--
--BUT I'M STARTING TO THINK THIS THING IS BUILT TO TAKE A LOT MORE DAMAGE THAN I'M BUILT TO DISH OUT.
SO WHEN IT MAKES ITS NEXT GRAB FOR ME--RATHER THAN STICK AROUND AND BE SNIPPED INTO LITTLE PIECES ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF WHEAT CHEX--
KRAS
SSHH!
--I OPT FOR THE COWARD'S WAY OUT.
THE WINDOW


OKAY, SO I CHEATED: I ALREADY KNOW THERE'S A FIRE ESCAPE JUST OUTSIDE
WHAT THE HELL, IT'S MY OFFICE, RIGHT? I'M ENTITLED
AND SINCE THERE'S ONLY A ONE STORY DROP TO THE ALLEY, I DO AN ERROL FLYNN LANDING WITH MY OWN INIMITABLE, FREE-FORM, OFFICIAL OLYMPICS STYLE--
--FACE FIRST IN A PUDDLE OF SLIME
SPLUNSH!
BUT I FIGURE--HEY, GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES--A COUPLE BOTTLES OF LINIMENT--
--AND I'LL BE GOOD AS NEW IN AN HOUR OR THREE
ONLY THING IS--THE TIME FRAME TURNS OUT TO BE CLOSER TO FIVE SECONDS.
SOMEHOW, I MANAGE TO KICK HIM OFF--BUT IT'S OBVIOUS HIS PROGRAM'S STILL STUCK ON ATTACK
WHY IS IT I FEEL LIKE SOMEBODY'S VIDEO GAME IS PLAYING ME?
THE WHOLE THING'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A LATE NIGHT CREATURE FEATURE WITHOUT BENEFIT OF POPCORN


"THINGS'VE GOT TO GET PRETTY ROUGH FOR ME TO TURN TRASH-PICKER IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD
"BUT JUST THIS MINUTE, I'D REACH FOR A LEPER'S TOOTHBRUSH, IF ITS THOUGHT IT MIGHT HOLD OL' BUG-BREATH AT BAY.
"THE SIGHT OF A MUD-SOAKED MANIAC BRANDISHING A BROKEN UMBRELLA AND A DENTED CAN LID IN A DARK ALLEY-WAY--THAT OUGHT TO BE ENOUGH TO SEND ANY ATTACKER PACKING FOR SAN JOSE
"BUT NO" THIS ONE NOT TODAY
"I JUST KEEPS COMING LIKE I'M IT'S LAST MEAL ON EARTH
SO YOU WANT TO FIGHT DIRTY, HUH?
"BEFORE ROACHIE-ROOTER CAN SHOW ME ITS ANSWER, I LUNGE--
THINK!
"DAD ALWAYS USED TO SAY--"IF YOU GOTTA GO FOR AN EYE, THEN YOU DAMN WELL BETTER MEAN IT"
"I DON'T THINK THIS IS QUITE WHAT HE MEANT--
"BUT SUDDENLY, THE ROBOT BLOWS UP LIKE EAST L.A. ON THE FOURTH OF JULY--
KA-POWW!
"--AND WHAT'S LEFT OF IT WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS COULD BE SPRINKLED ON A CANDY BAR--
"--WITHOUT BREAKING ANY FDA RULES ABOUT SMALL INSECT PARTS."
JEEZ


"GOOD OLD LEON! ALWAYS READY WITH A CUP OF TEA AND A COMFORTING WORD
I EVER TELL YOU, MY DEAR, ABOUT THE TIME I SAW A 300-POUND CANARY ON BURBANK BOULEVARD?
YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING THE TONIGHT SHOW AGAIN, LEON
THIS IS SERIOUS!
BELIEVE IT! I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN SENT ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE IN THE MIDDLE OF HURRICANE DIANE!
LEON BERGSTROM, MEET DETECTIVE MIKE SANCHEZ AND HIS FAITHFUL INDIAN COMPANION, McGUFFIN.
ENCHANTÉE
DON'T GET CUTE, LADY. WE'VE BEEN ALL OVER THAT ALLEY, UP TO OUR BLOWHOLES IN LAST WEEK'S GARBAGE--
--AND ALL WE COULD FIND OF YOUR SO-CALLED "ROBOT ROACH" IS THIS.
LOOKS LIKE A GEAR OFF A KID'S BIKE, TO ME
BE SURE TO PUT THAT IN YOUR REPORT! "HOLLYWOOD DETECTIVE TASHED BY TRICYCLIST." THAT'LL SURE PUT YOU IN GOOD WITH THE POLICE COMMISSIONER.
IT'S MY FAULT THERE WEREN'T ANY WITNESSES?
OH, WE GOT A WITNESS, ALL RIGHT
BEEN SLEEPIN' ONE OFF IN THE ALLEY ALL DAY, AND HE DIDN'T HEAR NOTHIN'
TH-THAT'S RIGHT OFFICER, I SWEAR IT. SINCE I WAS JUST MINDIN' MY OWN BUSINESS, SEE, AND--
THAT'S YOUR WITNESS--A PROFESSIONAL ROTGUT GUZZLER? YOU'RE GONNA TAKE HIS WORD OVER MINE, SANCHEZ?
ONLY TILL YOU COME UP WITH A STORY THAT MAKES SENSE...OR ELSE SOME EVIDENCE.
OKAY, McGUFFIN... GET HIM OUT OF HERE BEFORE SOMEBODY LIGHTS A MATCH
EVIDENCE YOU WANT? OKAY--YOU GOT IT!
NEXT TIME YOU SEE ME, I'LL HAVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CHOKE A JUDGE
--OR ELSE YOU'LL BE VIEWING ME THROUGH A BODY-BAG


"AS I MAKE MY BIG EXIT, I CAN FEEL THAT BEAM'S STARE--LIKE A SNOW-CONE SLIDING DOWN MY SPINE.
"GUESS HE DIDN'T MUCH LIKE WHAT I SAID ABOUT HIM
"MAYBE I SHOULD BE WONDERING IF HE WAS LYING, OR JUST DRUNK... BUT RIGHT ABOUT NOW, I'M JUST TOO DAMN MAD TO CARE.
"NEITHER AM I IN ANY MOOD FOR ANOTHER GAME OF 52-FILE PICK-UP.
: DID THIS TO MY OWN OFFICE RIGHT SANCHEZ?
"TAKES ME A MINUTE TO NOTICE THE PHONE MESSAGE...LET ALONE THE FLOWERS.
Jonni' Knock em dead kid. Sunshine
GOOD OL SUNSHINE! WHY IS IT ALWAYS GUYS LIKE HIM WHO KNOW HOW TO TREAT GIRLS LIKE ME?
Jonni'... Hold onto your head, girl. Cause you'll never guess who called you! Slim Chance. The Slim Chance singin' cowboy from the Crafty 30 & Dead who wants you to meet him at the Beverly Hills Hotel at 2. Lucky you. P.S. The posies are for you. not those broads from Homicide Heaven.
"ON A DAY ALREADY TOP HEAVY WITH A COOPSE COPS AND A COVERUP, A MEETING WITH CLARENCE SLIM CHANCE IS JUST WHAT I DON'T NEED
DRIVING ALONG SUNSET I STOP TO FIGURE WHAT A COMPLETE STAR TWO SLEAZY TYCOON WANTS WITH ME
"PROBABLY WANTS TO [illegible] BEER ABOUT [illegible] YEARS [illegible]
"--AND ALL SLIM CHANCE HAD TO HIS NAME WAS A GUITAR AND A YODEL.
ALWAYS HATED THAT YODEL!

"BUT MAYBE I'M JUST PRE-JUDICED, 'CAUSE I KNOW IT WAS *DAD'S STUNT-RIDING* MADE THAT BIG PHONY A SATURDAY MATINEE IDOL IN THE *FIRST* PLACE.

"ONLY SADDLE-SORES *SLIM CHANCE* EVER GOT WAS FROM WEARING HIS *WALLET* TOO THICK.

RING *Mr. CHANCE'S* SUITE, PLEASE. HE'S EXPECTING--

NO NEED, SON

AFTERNOON, MIZ THUNDER. SHORE SORRY TO HEAR 'BOUT YORE *DADDY.*

HEART ATTACK, WEREN'T IT?

ANIMAL ATTACK, Mr. CHANCE...

PLEASE--MAKE IT "UNCLE SLIM."

...TOO MANY *CAMELS*, TOO MUCH *WILD TURKEY*

YEP. JIMMIE-BOY ALWAYS *WAS* A STUBBORN CUSS.

AH FIGGERED IT WAS THE *CHEROKEE BLOOD* IN 'IM.

POLO LOUNGE

WHY, LAST TIME AH SEEN YOU, Y'ALL WAS KNEE-HIGH TO A--

NOT TODAY, Mr. C. OKAY?

"FOR AWHILE, HE JUST DRAWLS ON ABOUT THE *GOOD OLD DAYS*, AND I'M STARTING TO THINK I WAS RIGHT. THEN--

YORE DADDY EVER MENTION ANYTHIN' ABOUT A *STATUE*, JANIE? A STATUE OF A *LADY LIGHTNING-BOLT?*

MY NAME'S STILL *JONNI*... AND NO, I DON'T RECALL HE *DID*.

WELL, GIVE YORE MIND SOME TIME TO *GRAZE* ON IT, HONEY.

AH CAN MAKE IT *WORTH* YORE *WHILE*...

...TO THE TUNE OF A *HUNDRED* OR SO... AN' AH *DO* MEAN IN THE KEY OF "G."

$100,000? DAD HAD A STATUE WORTH *THAT MUCH?*

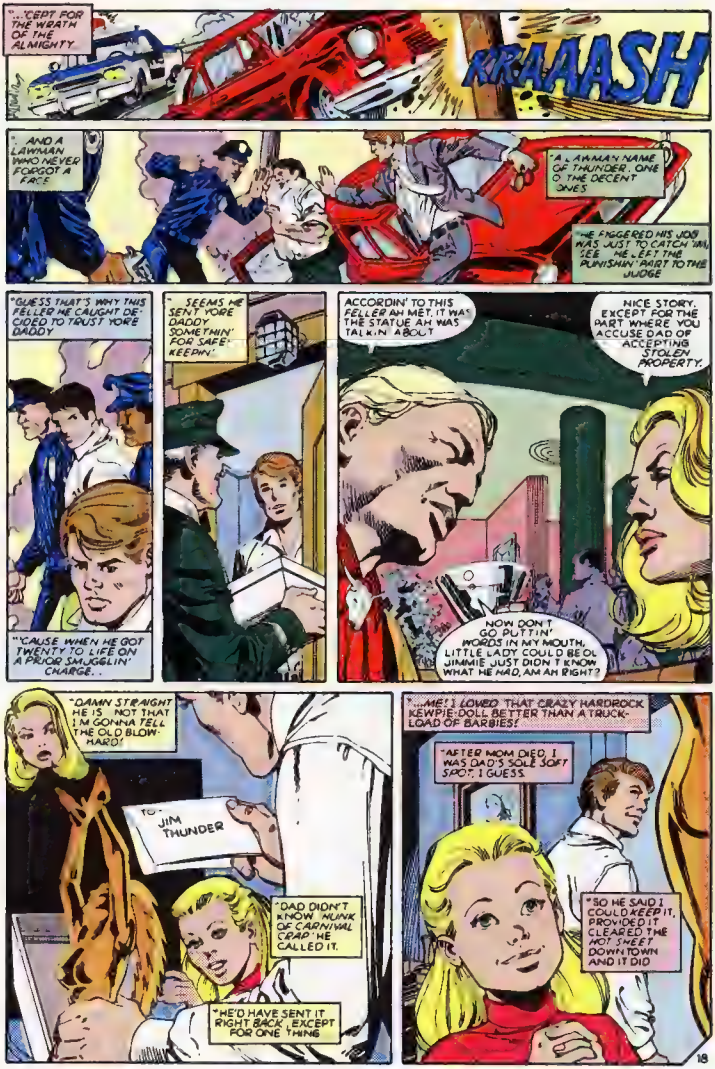
ONLY 'CAUSE AH'M WILLING TO BET THAT A *TALE* A FELLER TOLD ME IS *THE GOOS TRUTH.*

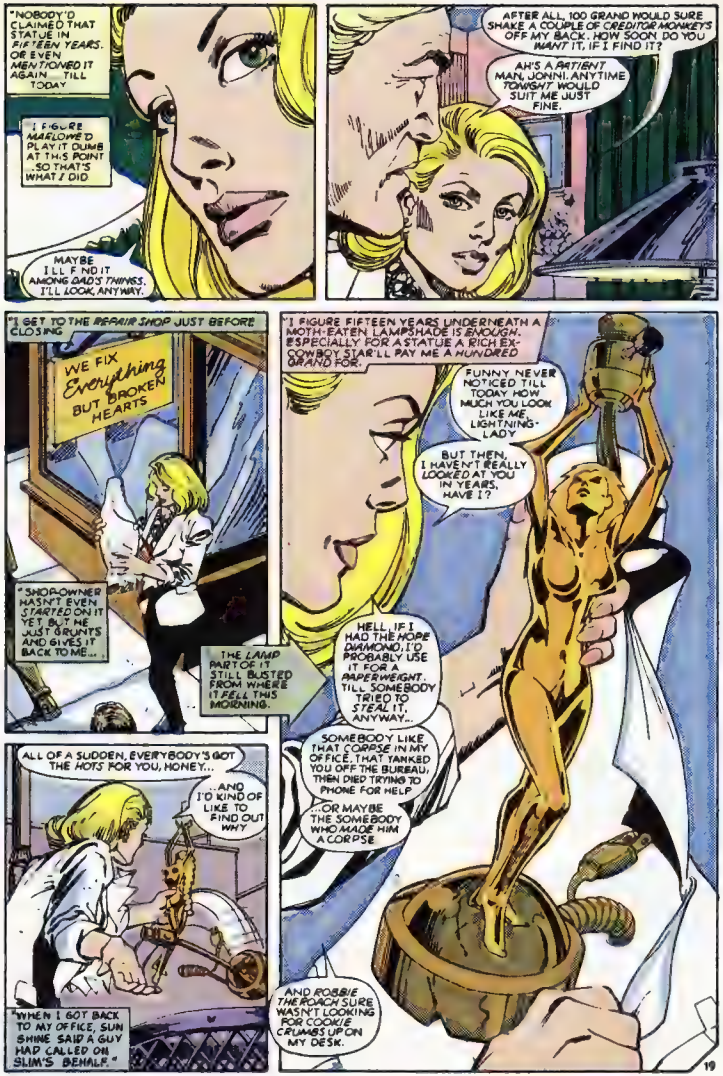
BUT THEN, Y'ALL KNOW AH WOULDN'T BE WHERE AH AM *TODAY* IF'N I WEREN'T A *GAMBLIN'* MAN.

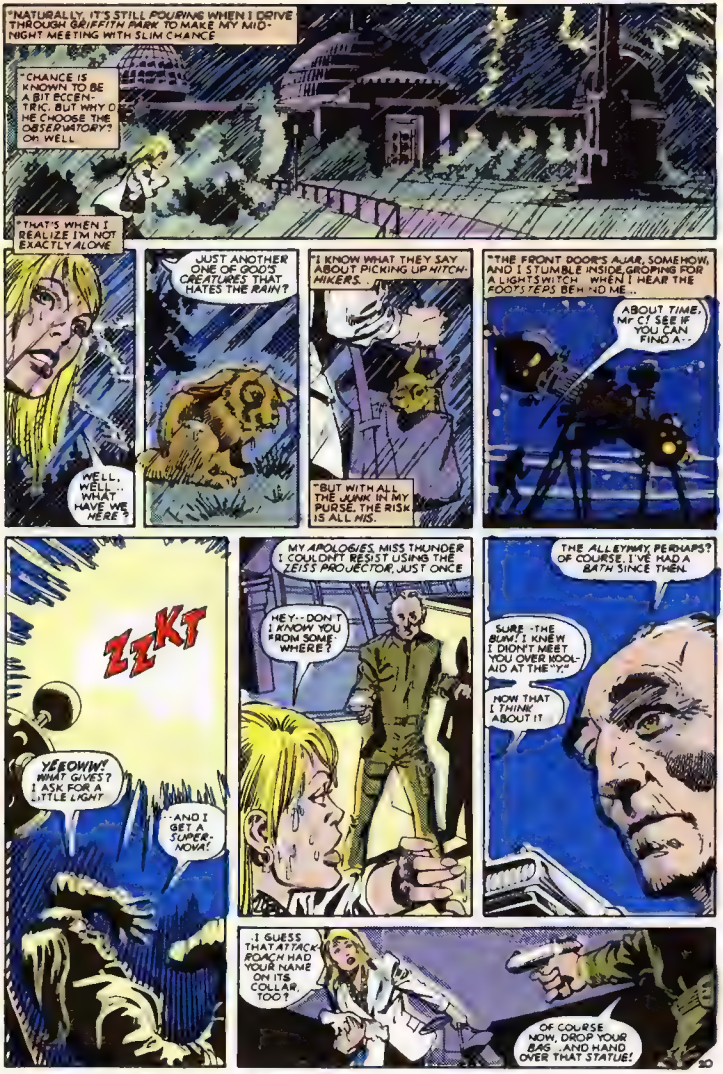
I COULD *USE* A GOOD STORY ABOUT NOW, Mr. CHANCE. WHY DON'T YOU *TELL* ME ONE?

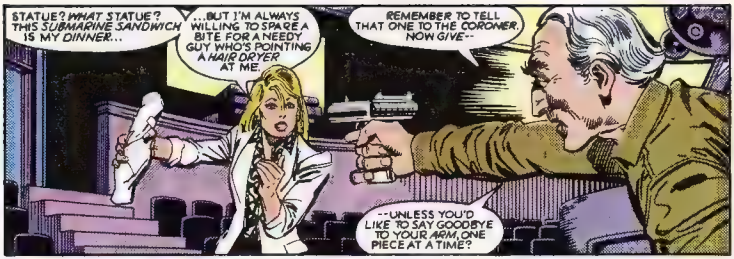
"GLAD TO OBLIGE. WELL, SEEMS THIS STATUE COMES FROM ONE OF THE NEW SOUTH OF THE BORDER PLACES... SOME PLACE IN THE MOUNTAINS BOLIVIA MAYBE OR PERU.
"IT WAS LOST SO LONG, EVEN THE LOCALS THOUGHT IT WAS GONE FOR GOOD.
"THAT IS, TILL 'BOUT FIFTEEN YEARS BACK, WHEN A COUPLE O' YANKEE TYPES TURNED UP DOWN THERE
"SMART FELLERS, 'MENA TWO FOUND THAT OLD IDOL FASTERN AROUND CAN SNIFF OUT A MAMBONE
"THEY WAS PAPOWERS, SEE.
"BUT THE ONE THA GRABBED IT FIRS' HE'D NEVER BEEN TOO MUCH ON SHARE.
SO HE SEZ "THE OTHER'N'S BRAINS OUT RIGHT THEN AND THERE
"...AND LIT OUT FOR HOME BEFORE THE YOKELS COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS WHAT.
"AN' YUH KNOW, MOM...WE MIGHT'VE GOT AWAY WITH IT, TOO.
EEEEEEEEEEE
CHINES

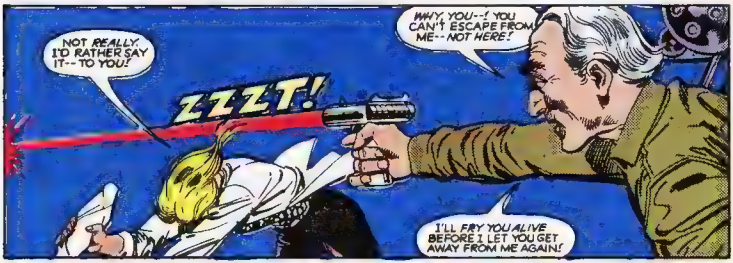
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

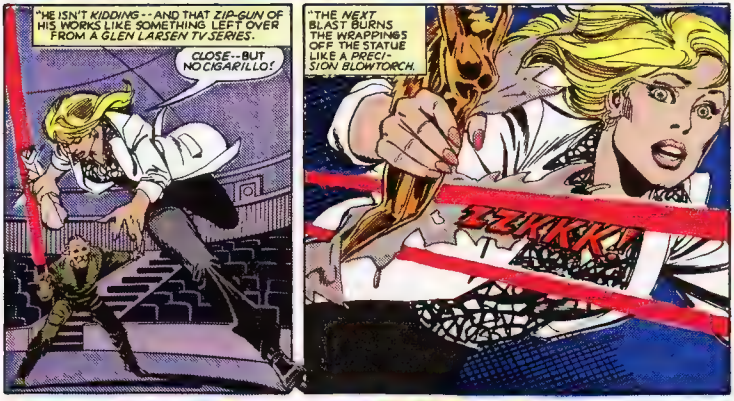

"...'CEPT FOR THE WRATH OF THE ALMIGHTY...
KRAAAASH
"...AND A LAWMAN WHO NEVER FORGOT A FACE
"A LAWMAN NAME OF THUNDER...ONE O' THE DECENT ONES
"HE FINGERED HIS JOB WAS JUST TO CATCH 'IM, SEE...HE LEFT THE PUNISHIN' PART TO THE JUDGE
"GUESS THAT'S WHY THIS FELLER HE CAUGHT DECIDED TO TRUST YORE DADDY
"'CAUSE WHEN HE GOT TWENTY TO LIFE ON A PRIOR SMUGGLIN' CHARGE...
"SEEMS HE SENT YORE DADDY SOMETHIN' FOR SAFE-KEEPIN'.
ACCORDIN' TO THIS FELLER AH MET, IT WAS THE STATUE AH WAS TALKIN' ABOUT
NICE STORY, EXCEPT FOR THE PART WHERE YOU ACCUSE DAD OF ACCEPTING STOLEN PROPERTY.
NOW DON'T GO PUTTIN' WORDS IN MY MOUTH, LITTLE LADY. COULD BE OL JIMMIE JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE HAD, AM AH RIGHT?
"DAMN STRAIGHT HE IS...NOT THAT I'M GONNA TELL THE OLD BLOWHARD!
TO: JIM THUNDER
"DAD DIDN'T KNOW HUNK OF CARNIVAL CRAP HE CALLED IT.
"HE'D HAVE SENT IT RIGHT BACK, EXCEPT FOR ONE THING
"...ME! I LOVED THAT CRAZY HARDROCK KEWPIE-DOLL BETTER THAN A TRUCKLOAD OF BARBIES!
"AFTER MOM DIED, I WAS DAD'S SOLE SOFT SPOT, I GUESS.
"SO HE SAID I COULD KEEP IT, PROVIDED IT CLEARED THE HOT SHEET DOWNTOWN AND IT DID


"NOBODY'D CLAIMED THAT STATUE IN FIFTEEN YEARS. OR EVEN MENTIONED IT AGAIN TILL TODAY
I FIGURE MARLOWE'D PLAY IT DUMB AT THIS POINT ..SO THAT'S WHAT I DID
MAYBE I'LL FIND IT AMONG DAD'S THINGS. I'LL LOOK, ANYWAY.
AFTER ALL, 100 GRAND WOULD SURE SHAKE A COUPLE OF CREDITOR MONKEYS OFF MY BACK. HOW SOON DO YOU WANT IT, IF I FIND IT?
AH'S A PATIENT MAN, JONNI. ANYTIME TONIGHT WOULD SUIT ME JUST FINE.
"I GET TO THE REPAIR SHOP JUST BEFORE CLOSING
WE FIX Everything BUT BROKEN HEARTS
"SHOP-OWNER HASN'T EVEN STARTED ON IT YET, BUT HE JUST GRUNTS AND GIVES IT BACK TO ME...
THE LAMP PART OF IT STILL BUSTED FROM WHERE IT FELL THIS MORNING.
"I FIGURE FIFTEEN YEARS UNDERNEATH A MOTH-EATEN LAMPSHADE IS ENOUGH. ESPECIALLY FOR A STATUE A RICH EX-COWBOY STAR'LL PAY ME A HUNDRED GRAND FOR.
FUNNY NEVER NOTICED TILL TODAY HOW MUCH YOU LOOK LIKE ME, LIGHTNING-LADY
BUT THEN, I HAVEN'T REALLY LOOKED AT YOU IN YEARS, HAVE I?
HELL, IF I HAD THE HOPE DIAMOND, I'D PROBABLY USE IT FOR A PAPERWEIGHT, TILL SOMEBODY TRIED TO STEAL IT, ANYWAY...
SOMEBODY LIKE THAT CORPSE IN MY OFFICE. THAT YANKED YOU OFF THE BUREAU, THEN DIED TRYING TO PHONE FOR HELP
...OR MAYBE THE SOMEBODY WHO MADE HIM A CORPSE.
ALL OF A SUDDEN, EVERYBODY'S GOT THE HOTS FOR YOU, HONEY...
...AND I'D KIND OF LIKE TO FIND OUT WHY
"WHEN I GOT BACK TO MY OFFICE, SUN SHINE SAID A GUY HAD CALLED ON SLIM'S BEHALF."
AND ROBBIE THE ROACH SURE WASN'T LOOKING FOR COOKIE CRUMBS UP ON MY DESK.


"NATURALLY, IT'S STILL POURING WHEN I DRIVE THROUGH GRIFFITH PARK TO MAKE MY MIDNIGHT MEETING WITH SLIM CHANCE
"CHANCE IS KNOWN TO BE A BIT ECCENTRIC. BUT WHY D HE CHOOSE THE OBSERVATORY? OH. WELL.
"THAT'S WHEN I REALIZE I'M NOT EXACTLY ALONE
WELL... WELL... WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
JUST ANOTHER ONE OF GOD'S CREATURES THAT HATES THE RAIN?
"I KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT PICKING UP HITCH-HIKERS.
"BUT WITH ALL THE JUNK IN MY PURSE, THE RISK IS ALL MIS.
"THE FRONT DOOR'S AJAR, SOMEHOW, AND I STUMBLE INSIDE, GROPING FOR A LIGHT SWITCH WHEN I HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME...
ABOUT TIME, MR CT SEE IF YOU CAN FIND A--
ZZKT
YEEOWW! WHAT GIVES? I ASK FOR A LITTLE LIGHT
--AND I GET A SUPER-NOVA!
MY APOLOGIES, MISS THUNDER I COULDN'T RESIST USING THE ZEISS PROJECTOR, JUST ONCE
HEY-- DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOME-WHERE?
THE ALLEGYMY, PERHAPS? OF COURSE, I'VE HAD A BATH SINCE THEN.
SURE -THE BUM! I KNEW I DIDN'T MEET YOU OVER KOOL-AID AT THE "Y"
HOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT
I GUESS THAT ATTACK ROACH HAD YOUR NAME ON ITS COLLAR, TOO?
OF COURSE NOW, DROP YOUR BAG AND HAND OVER THAT STATUE!


STATUE? WHAT STATUE? THIS SUBMARINE SANDWICH IS MY DINNER...
...BUT I'M ALWAYS WILLING TO SPARE A BITE FOR A NEEDY GUY WHO'S POINTING A HAIR DRYER AT ME.
REMEMBER TO TELL THAT ONE TO THE CORONER. NOW GIVE--
--UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR ARM, ONE PIECE AT A TIME?


NOT REALLY. I'D RATHER SAY IT-- TO YOU!
ZZZT!
WHY, YOU--! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM ME-- NOT HERE!
I'LL FRY YOU ALIVE BEFORE I LET YOU GET AWAY FROM ME AGAIN!


HE ISN'T KIDDING-- AND THAT ZIP-GUN OF HIS WORKS LIKE SOMETHING LEFT OVER FROM A GLEN LARSEN TV SERIES.
CLOSE-- BUT NO CIGARILLO!
THE NEXT BLAST BURNS THE WRAPPINGS OFF THE STATUE LIKE A PRECI-SION BLOWTORCH.
ZZZKKK!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

"--AND PRAY I CAN EITHER *OUT-RUN* HIM--OR OUT-LAST THE *POWER-PACK* ON HIS GUN.

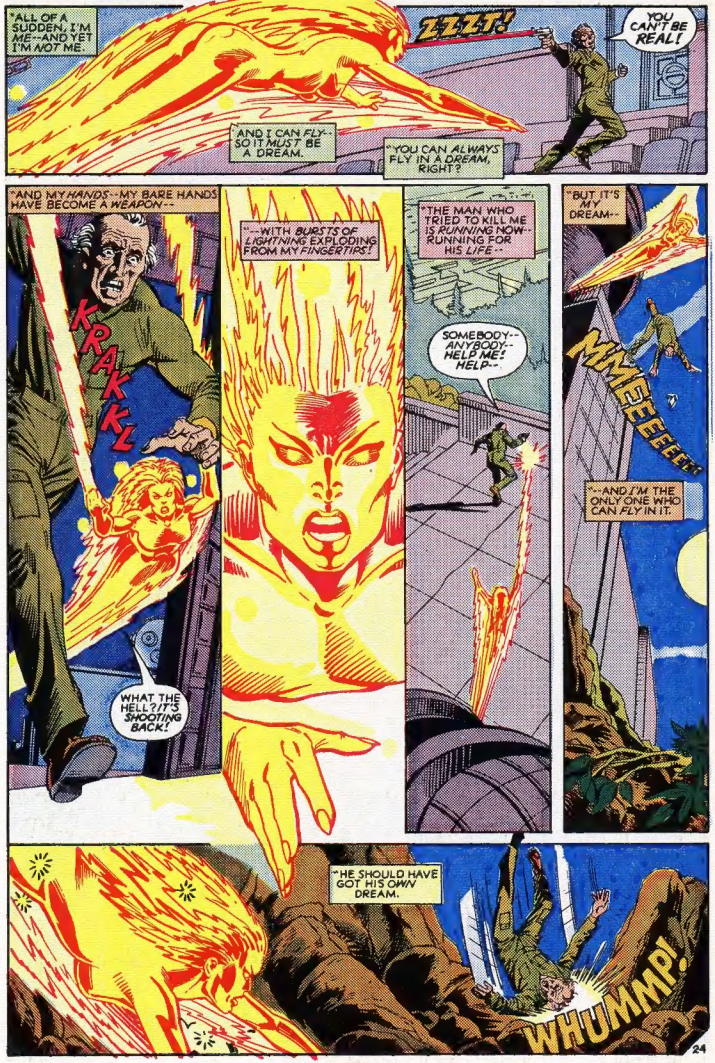
YOU *LOUSY*--! YOU MADE ME HIT THE *PROJECTOR!*

ZAK T!

A BEAUTIFUL MACHINE LIKE THAT --*DAMAGED* JUST BECAUSE YOU WON'T LIE DOWN AND *DIE!*

ZZZ

"FOR A SECOND, I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THE SCREAM I HEAR IS MY OWN OR NOT.
"TURNS OUT IT IS.
AAAAAAA
TOO LATE, DAMMIT--
"PAIN.
"NOTHING BUT PAIN.
"MERCILESS, UNFORGIVING PAIN.
TOO LATE!
"NO MORE SCREAMING NOW.
"NO MORE BREATHING.
"NO MORE LIVING.
KRAKKKL
"EXCEPT THAT--I'M HAVING THIS DREAM!
"A DREAM OF INDESCRIBABLE POWER FLOWING THROUGH ME--POWER THAT SEEMS TO WRENCH MATTER FROM THE ENERGY INSIDE ME--
"--LIFE FROM DEATH!
"AND THEN--JUST LIKE THAT--I'M NOT AFRAID ANY-MORE--
YOU'RE AN ILLUSION, THAT'S ALL--SOME KIND OF SYNAPTICAL MALFUNCTION--
I--I GOTTA BE HALLUCINATING!
"--AS IF I NO LONGER HAVE FLESH TO FEAR FOR.
THIS WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!
IT'S--PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE!


"ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M ME--AND YET I'M NOT ME.
ZZZT!
YOU CAN'T BE REAL!
"AND I CAN FLY--SO IT MUST BE A DREAM.
"YOU CAN ALWAYS FLY IN A DREAM, RIGHT?
"AND MY HANDS--MY BARE HANDS HAVE BECOME A WEAPON--
KRAKKL
WHAT THE HELL?! IT'S SHOOTING BACK!
"--WITH BURSTS OF LIGHTNING EXPLODING FROM MY FINGERTIPS!
"THE MAN WHO TRIED TO KILL ME IS RUNNING NOW--RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE--
SOMEBODY--ANYBODY--HELP ME! HELP--
"BUT IT'S MY DREAM--
NNNEEEEEE!
"--AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FLY IN IT.
"HE SHOULD HAVE GOT HIS OWN DREAM.
WHUMP!

"IF I WERE AWAKE, I'D BE *SORRY*-- BUT THIS IS A *DREAM*--

"--AND I'M *NOT* SORRY AT ALL.

"BUT NOW, IN THE *STRANGE LOGIC* OF MY DREAM--

"I MUST *RETURN*-- SOMEWHERE.

"TO--*ME*!

KRAKKKL

"OTHERWISE, I KNOW I'M NEVER GONNA *WAKE UP* AGAIN.

"HELLUVA DREAM.

"HELLUVA *NIGHTMARE*, I SHOULD SAY.

DID I FORGET TO PAY MY *ELECTRIC* BILL, OR WHAT?

"WHEN I FINALLY LOOK DOWN AT THE *LIFELESS CORPSE* SPRAWLED FAR BELOW, I KNOW IT *WASN'T* A DREAM AT ALL...NOT QUITE.

"IN A RUSH, I REMEMBER *ANOTHER* NIGHT--AT THE *HOSPITAL*:

"THE BLINDING *WHITE LIGHT* AND THE STENCH OF *ETHER* AND THE BLEARY-EYED *DOCTOR* CLEARING HIS THROAT.

"I'D KNOWN, EVEN BEFORE HE SPOKE, THAT MY *DAD* WAS DEAD, TOO.

"GOD, HOW I'D *PRAYED* FOR SOMEONE TO WAKE ME UP THAT NIGHT.

"BUT NO ONE COULD THEN...

"AND NO ONE CAN *NOW*.

NEXT: RED NAILS *IN THE SUNSET!*

DC Comics Inc.
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New York, NY 10103

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THE SOUND OF THUNDER

Johnny Thunder.

A name which has intrigued more comic-book editors, writers, and artists than one over the past forty-plus years.

First, of course, there was the Johnny Thunder who made his debut in FLASH COMICS #1, 1940, in a strip actually entitled "Jehnny Thunderbelt"—written by John B. Wentworth and drawn by Stan Aach, under the name Stan Josephs.

This is the same JT, more or less, who, as an early member of the legendary Justice Society of America, survived in DC Comics till 1948, and has been revived as a JSAer for a couple of decades now.

(You can glimpse him occasionally, if you're in the mood, in our companion magazines ALL-STAR SQUADRON and INFINITY, INC.—in occasional JSA team-ups in JUSTICE LEAGUE—and as a matter of fact, right this minute, he's on trial with the rest of the JSA in another four-part mini-series, AMERICA VS. THE JUSTICE SOCIETY.) He was quite a character, was Johnny, at least in potential: A regular Joe (if perhaps a bit thick in the cranium department) who, by means of the magic word "Cei-U" (pronounced like "say you"), could control a magical, living Thunderbolt with its own distinct personality.

Even after the original Johnny was edged out of both his own series and ALL-STAR COMICS by his own discovery, The Black Canary, the name just wouldn't die.

First the team of Robert Kanigher and Alex Toth created a Western here named Johnny Thunder, complete with a horse named Black Lightnin', for the 100th issue of ALL-AMERICAN COMICS. He proved popular enough that, ere long, the magazine's title was changed to ALL-AMERICAN WESTERN.

But there was a hitch: this Johnny Thunder was merely the secret identity of a mild-mannered schoolmaster named John Tate, not a real name at all. In one form or another, the cowboy Johnny Thunder held forth in ALL-STAR WESTERN a decade or so ago, as well.

What's in a name?

I'm not sure myself. All I knew is that, when I decided I'd rather write for DC a few years back, I sat down and made a list of some characters I'd like to create—and one of them (a male, but quite different from any preceding version—or this one) was named JOHNNY THUNDER. Maybe that one will still appear, since the name wasn't an integral part of the concept.

Then, one day a couple of years ago now, while Gerry Conway and I were working out the plot snags in an early, still-unproduced (but paid for!) movie script, our minds turned—as writers' minds tend to do at such times—to a different medium entirely. To comic-books. And more specifically, to the long-neglected genre of private-eye comic-books.

Sure, there'd been a zillion of them over the years—but to the best of our knowledge, nobody'd ever tried combining the private eye and the super-hero. And it seemed like a fun idea to try. I suggested the title be JONNI THUNDER, A.K.A. THUNDERBOLT, and that idea in turn sparked Gerry and I to create the general parameters of a character.

Gerry himself was too busy to get too involved in the actual writing—though later he did co-plot this first issue—so I sat down and wrote what I termed a "Prospectus" on the character, the concept, and the comic-book, and sent it off to Dick Giordano and Janette Kahn. Already by then, I had settled upon an artist—one Ernie Colón, with whom I had co-created ARAK, SON OF THUNDER. Hmmm... maybe with the same last names like that, they were related. Oh, well...

At any rate, Dick and Janette approved the idea almost at once, but by then Ernie was already starting to get involved full-time with AMETHYST, and Dick himself had expressed an interest in being the artist.

Dick and I had known each other since his Charlton tenure in the late 60's, and had worked together at Marvel a bit earlier on *Conan, Red Sonja, Dracula,* etc., back at Marvel a bit earlier. I'd always wanted to do a real series with him, even a four-issue mini-series. (We discussed starting right off with a regular monthly book, but neither of us was certain we could keep up the pace, what with our regular schedules. In case you didn't know, Dick is the Editorial Vice-President of DC Comics, though that has absolutely zilch to do with my reasons for wanting to see him draw JONNI THUNDER.)

Along the way, as I became more involved with my new wife Dann in writing ARAK, I acquired a co-writer-in-residence, as well. Though familiar with the detective tradition, of course—she'd read quite a bit of Agatha Christie—Dann became really turned on by the Raymond Chandler novels featuring his ace detective, Philip Marlowe, while we were driving around France on our honeymoon in '81. We thus decided that, while hardly trying to eschew the prior ascendency of Dashiell Hammett, creator of Sam Spade, etc., we'd make Jonni a young woman whose big ambition in life was to *be* Philip Marlowe.

Only thing is, due to circumstances beyond her control, she had this tendency to turn into a living Thunderbolt every now and then. Something which would give her a distinct advantage over other, more earthbound P.I.'s like Magnum and Marlowe—with a corresponding extra dimension of danger.

Because, after all, when one becomes a super-hero, even of a different sort, there's a natural tendency to get involved with a more colorful, more powerful, even more deadly type of bad-guy, as well. That's what we wanted—first Gerry and I, then Dick and I, finally even Dann and I.

Of course, due to Dick's and my hectic schedules for the past couple of years, DC has meanwhile come out with another, quite different, but good-in-its-own-way series called NATHANIEL DUSK. In his notes on the series, its creator, Don McGregor, delineates how overjoyed he was to find out that his private detective wouldn't have to be a super-hero.

Just goes to show you what makes horse-racing... since, though I'd love sometime to do a straight private eye series, with Jonni Thunder or someone else, it was precisely the addition of the super-hero element that made me want to do JONNI THUNDER.

Great to know there's room for all at the New DC.

(We were a bit chagrined last TV season—no good year after JONNI THUNDER had been conceived—to see a couple of aspects of her accidentally anticipated in a TV movie called *This Girl for Hire,* with Bess Armstrong: a blonde detective in Hollywood, even an association with a guy in a bookstore. Fortunately, she didn't turn into a Thunderbolt, and the movie wasn't too similar otherwise to JONNI. But it did give us a couple of anxious moments.)

As to precisely how Dick, Gerry, Dann, and I see Jonni and her series—well, that's what I was originally going to write this text page about.

However, I've also written some words in that direction to be hopefully used in one of Dick's *Meanwhile...* columns, and still another view for the DC SAMPLER #3, which will be given away at comic-book stores any day now.

So you'll just have to settle for this—and for the story itself, as it begins to unfold.

We hope and trust the story will speak for itself.

As for comments—well, we'd love to hear them. Send them to:

JONNI THUNDER
DC Comics, 8th Floor
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Meanwhile, be here in thirty days—as Jonni wanders up to San Francisco to meet a hard-boiled eye named Harrisen Trump and a really strange person called, of all things—Red Nails.

(Oh, yes, and if you've got $1.50 left over after purchasing JONNI THUNDER #1, may we suggest you try the first issue of the aforementioned AMERICA VS. THE JUSTICE SOCIETY mini-series, also on sale right now. If nothing else, for a glimpse of that other, first J.T.!)

—Roy Thomas